REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants respectfully request entry of this After - Final Amendment. The only proposed claim amendments are to Claims 7 and 19 for correcting obvious typographical errors. The proposed amendment to Claim 7 merely corrects an inadvertent error in which the word "exchanging" was placed after the word "group" instead of before the word "group." The intended phrase was "message exchanging group," which should be clear from the use of this term in some of the other claims (such as Claims 10, 13, 16, 19, and 22). In Claim 19, a period within the body of the claim is replaced by a semi-colon. As these proposed corrections to Claims 7 and 19 do not raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration, entry of this proposed amendment is proper, and such entry is respectfully requested.

Claims 7-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0103932 to Bilbrey et al. Claims 12, 18 and 24 have been cancelled, without prejudice, thereby rendering this rejection moot with respect to these claims. However, with respect to Claims 7-11, 13-17, and 19-23, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

With regard to independent Claims 7, 13 and 19, Applicant respectfully submits that the Bilbrey et al. reference fails to disclose message-address management processing that includes, *inter alia*, "specifying a server to which the absence response information is to be provided, on the basis of the extracted message address," as defined in independent Claims 7, 13 and 19.

In the present invention of Claims 7, 13 and 19, all of the servers in the network are not automatically notified of the change of address (found in the absence response information). Instead, only the server (or servers) specified by a determination made from information in the extracted message addresses of the other members of the message address list are notified. Thus, the following procedure is one example of an embodiment of the invention of Claims 7, 13 and 19: (1) absence response information (i.e., change of address information, including both old and new addresses) is received from a client; (2) message address lists are searched to find a list (or lists) that include the old address; (3) the address lists are reviewed to determine domain information indicating the servers capable of transmitting all messages of the members of the address list(s) from step (2); and (4) only those servers determined in step (3) are notified of the absence response information. In other words, as defined in Claims 7, 13 and 19, there is a step of "specifying a server to which the information is to be provided, on the basis of the extracted message address [of other members of address list(s) of the member changing his/her address]" (emphasis added).

In contrast, the Bilbrey et al. device lacks a feature in which the servers to be notified are specified based on the addresses of other members of a mailing list, as this feature is defined in independent Claims 7, 13 and 19. Instead, in the device of the first embodiment of the Bilbrey et al. reference, the sponsor database that requested the updated mailbox address list always receives the updated list (*see* Figure 1). Or, the Bilbrey et al. reference also discloses that the re-connection manager of the first embodiment can be

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configured so that the network server 106 also receives the change of address records. *See* Bilbrey et al., page 4, paragraph 55, lines 7-9. The Bilbrey et al. reference also appears to disclose that multiple servers can also be involved in the "E-mail address change network" (EACN). *Se e.g.,* Bilbrey et al., page 1, paragraph 7, lines 1-7. However, the Bilbrey et al. reference does not disclose or suggest any method of *specifying* particular servers to receive the address change information, as in the present invention of Claims 7, 13 and 19. Instead, assuming *arguendo* that the multiple servers do receive the address change information, they all receive the information, without any selection process based on addresses extracted from an address list, as recited in Claims 7, 13 and 19. Accordingly, as all of the features of independent Claims 7, 13 and 19 are not disclosed in the Bilbrey et al. reference, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §102(e) rejection of independent Claims 7, 13 and 19 and associated dependent Claims 8, 9, 14, 15, 20 and 21.

With regard to independent Claim 10, the Bilbrey et al. reference fails to disclose message-address management processing that includes, *inter alia*, a process in which, "when receiving a message to be transmitted to another server, judging whether or not an original address of the received message matches the old address [of a change of address notification]; replacing the original address . . . with a new address . . . and transmitting the message using the replaced address." Similar procedures are defined in independent Claims 16 and 22. In other words, the invention defined in Claims 10, 16 and 22 relates to a situation in which when a message is transmitted to another server, there is a judging step in which it is determined whether the original address matches an old address of a change of

address notification, and if so, the old address is replaced with the new address, and the message is transmitted to the new address. Thus, with the invention of Claims 10, 16 and 22, there is a process for automatically sending a message to a new address when an address has changed.

In contrast, the process of the embodiment of Figures 20 and 21 of the Bilbrey et al. reference does not have any such automatic forwarding of messages when an address has been changed. Instead, the process of Figures 20 and 21 of the Bilbrey et al. reference merely relates to providing sponsors (network members) with updated address lists, without automatically forwarding messages to a new address that have been transferred between servers after determining whether there has been an address change.

More specifically, the portion of the process disclosed in paragraph 58 (lines 12-20) of Bilbrey et al., and relied upon by the Examiner, discloses matching updated e-mail addresses with old e-mail addresses, and providing the matches to the network server. Such a process is not the same as the claimed process of "judging whether or not an original address *of the received message* matches the old address contained in the absence response information" (emphasis added) because the matching step of Bilbrey et al. does not relate to matching an address <u>of a message</u> (such as an e-mail message), but instead merely relates to matching an address <u>of a list</u>, where the address is not the intended delivery address associated with a message.

Further, the Examiner equated the process described in paragraphs 49-51 of Bilbrey et al. with the claimed process of "replacing the original address [of the received

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message] with a new address." However, once again, the process of the Bilbrey et al. reference merely relates to replacing addresses in a list of addresses, and not to replacing an address *of a message*, as defined in Claims 10, 16 and 22. It should be noted that although this section of Claims 10, 16 and 22 does not include the bracketed phrase "of the received message," the term "the original address" is defined earlier in the claims to be "the original address of the received message," so this designation continues through the claim.

Finally, the Examiner equated the process shown in step 2005 of Figure 20 of the Bilbrey et al. reference with the claimed process of "transmitting the message using the replaced address, which is the new address in the absence response information." However, step 2005 of Bilbrey et al. merely allows the sponsors to update their data bases for sending *future* messages, but does not disclose transmitting an *existing* message with a replaced address. *See* Bilbrey et al., page 9, paragraph 95, lines 17-21 ("Sponsors . . . update their own databases [and] continue to provide messages to the recipient at the "new" address (Step 2005).").

Thus, as all of the features of independent Claims 10, 16 and 22 are not disclosed in the Bilbrey et al. reference, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of this §102(e) rejection of independent Claims 10, 16 and 22 and associated dependent Claims 11, 17 and 23.
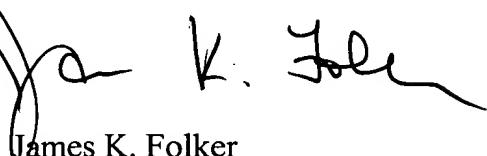
For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference

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would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner

is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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